

book carrying such an astronomical price includes neither a subject nor a name index.

Across the national variations, one can extract at least four generalizations of particular relevance to a Catholic theological journal. First, the link between renewed interest in the Catholic Enlightenment and the Second Vatican Council is inescapable. The council's liturgical reforms, its emphasis on episcopal collegiality, its return to Scripture and pre-Scholastic sources, and its opening to dialogue with contemporary thought and other religious traditions all echo concerns of the Catholic Enlightenment. Yet any parallels between current developments and 18th-century foreshadowings must take account of a vast change in the environment.

Second, intimate connections between religious and political power were the norm in that 18th-century environment. Church leaders, whether quarreling factions within the Catholic Enlightenment or traditionalist opponents, naturally turned to government to enforce their views. Monarchs were interested in expropriating church wealth and harnessing church energies to secular purposes.

Third, infighting within the Catholic Enlightenment drastically impeded its engagement with its secular counterpart. Jansenists and Jesuits expended more polemical firepower on each other than on the emerging secular Enlightenment, and in their zeal they did not hesitate to employ institutional sanctions, including the refusal of sacraments for Jansenists and ultimately the suppression of the Jesuits. When these embattled camps did turn their attention to materialist or irreligious adversaries, they typically outbid each other in censorship and condemnations, only radicalizing the secular Enlightenment.

Fourth, the French Revolution sounded the death knell for the Catholic Enlightenment. The Revolution's 1790 Civil Constitution of the Clergy pushed the norm of political intervention into ecclesiastical reform over the edge. And elite Catholic reformers proved out of touch with the popular devotional religiosity that would be the soil, after decades of post-Revolutionary turmoil, for 19th-century Catholic renewal.

This volume is a highly valuable mapping of a poorly known movement in religious history that should be of major interest to both historians and theologians.

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PROCESS THEOLOGY: A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED. By Bruce G. Epperly. New York: T. & T. Clark, 2011. Pp. x + 177. \$24.95.

Writing for T. & T. Clark's Guides for the Perplexed series, Epperly in two introductory chapters first provides an overview of Whitehead's

metaphysical scheme and lists some prominent process theologians (Charles Hartshorne, John Cobb, among others). He then critiques traditional Christian concepts (God as Transcendent Being, human sinfulness, and the problem of evil in human life), before offering with process theology a new vision of God as “creative, responsive Love,” our intimate companion in life who respects our freedom of choice and yet offers guidance for difficult decisions. Afterward E. evaluates various Christian beliefs in the light of Whitehead’s metaphysics and process theology. For example, in the chapter on Christology, E. writes: “Our beliefs about Jesus as the revelation of God’s presence in the world for our healing and salvation can be life-transforming” (62). But he also quotes David Griffin on a “naturalistic” understanding of Christ’s divinity: “God had a special but not metaphysically unique relationship with Jesus” (66). Likewise, with reference to the healing miracles performed by Jesus—in particular, healing the woman suffering from hemorrhages—E. comments: “This power, however, did not come supernaturally from beyond but from within the very flesh and blood of Jesus, that is, from his own personal, spiritual energy as it called forth her own immanent divinely-inspired healing energies,” energies that can also be called forth through therapeutic touch, acupuncture, and other forms of energy medicine (72). All this is clearly consonant with Whitehead’s empirically oriented metaphysics, but is it likewise consonant with traditional Christian orthodoxy as expressed in the decrees of the ecumenical councils at Ephesus and Chalcedon? The same “naturalistic” understanding of Christian doctrine comes to the fore when E. quotes with approval Cobb’s and Griffin’s treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity: “The main distinction to be made is that between the creative and responsive sides of divine love rather than the three persons of the Trinity” (77).

The underlying methodological issue here is whether Christian dogmas should be in some measure reconceived in terms of Whitehead’s metaphysical vision, or whether Whitehead’s metaphysics should be carefully rethought to accord better with long-standing Christian beliefs. E. has evidently chosen the first alternative; I myself have by and large chosen the second alternative but always with the expectation that in due time a middle-ground position compatible with the legitimate demands of both reason and revelation will be recognized and accepted. In the meantime there are clear gains and losses on both sides of the argument. The advantage of the first alternative is that it presumably better fits the mind-set of contemporary Christians who are heavily influenced by the empirically testable results of modern science. The advantage of the second alternative is that contemporary Christians thereby remain better connected to their predecessors in the time-honored process of handing on the distinctive beliefs of Christianity to the next generation. At the same time, I question

whether E.'s own exposition of process theology would not have been better served if he had at least alluded to other options for thinking through the relation between philosophy and theology. As a good Whiteheadian, he might have been more consciously "relational" in his thinking about this controversial issue. The proper antidote for being perplexed, after all, is not simply to accept what others believe but to do some independent thinking and then decide for oneself what to believe.

The chapter entitled "Ethics for a Small Planet" nicely underscores my point here. E. takes up two controversial issues in bioethics (abortion and euthanasia) and several other emotionally charged topics (e.g., full gender equality, animal rights, the necessary parameters of an economic system that is both just and sustainable). He ventures into this minefield with his own views based on the thinking of notable process theologians like Cobb, but at the same time with respect for the right of others to come to different conclusions. His thinking here is admirably governed by the following judicious statement: "Process ethics is theocentric and global as well as personal in orientation. At the heart of process ethics is the recognition that rights are primarily relational and contextual, and not individualistic and absolute, and that ethical thinking must go beyond anthropocentrism to consider the well-being of nonhumans, the survival of species, and the health of the planet as a whole" (114). Every intelligent Christian, regardless of his or her religious orientation, should heed this sensible guideline for rational discussion.

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COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY AND THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS RIVALRY.
By Hugh Nicholson. New York: Oxford, 2011. Pp. xxiv + 320. \$74.

Nicholson offers an insightful overview of the origins and development of comparative theology in its historical and political context, demonstrating that recent comparative theology shares more with its 19th-century namesake than is often acknowledged. N. argues convincingly for the unavoidable political dimension of the disciplines of theology, comparative theology, and comparative religion. He laments that in the aftermath of the Wars of Religion, liberal theologians such as Schleiermacher sought to depoliticize religion by identifying a nonsectarian, conflict-free common essence of religion. N. claims that this endeavor to depoliticize religion has contributed to the present-day marginalization of comparative theology.

N. draws on the thought of Nazi theorist Carl Schmitt to refute this approach as a vain, counterproductive effort to deny the essential element of conflict in identity formation. Given the problematic history of Jewish-Christian relations and the horrors of Nazism, one may question the